Role of Libraries in Quality Education for Achieving SDG

Moorttimatee Samantaray
Deputy Librarian and Head, LDD
National Council of Educational Research and Training
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-16
Email- murtimati.rath@gmail.com

Abstract

The MDGs came to their deadlines, a new agenda emerged to transform the world to better meet human needs and the requirements of the economic transformation, known as "Sustainable Development Goals". This paper aims to touch upon the fourth agenda of SDG, which centers round the quality education. The library acts as the hub of the academic activities. Therefore, this paper attempts to highlight information ecology, Information literacy, Digital Literacy in knowledge Economy, highlighting the role of Library & Information centers in meeting SDGs. The author concludes highlighting the traditional roles of libraries along with the services, which has transformed the libraries to knowledge centres. The paper calls upon the administrators, policy makers, managers, research scholars and the community members to use the library resources and services and enable to act as a platform in meeting the SDGs by 2030.

Keywords

MDG; SDG; Information Literacy; Digital Literacy; Information Ecology

.

Electronic access

The journal is available at www.jalis.in

Journal of Advances in Library and Information Science
ISSN: 2277-2219 Vol. 6. No.1. 2017. pp.31-35

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge society exists since the existence of human being in different forms. The development of society depends on well-educated and well-informed community, where information and knowledge are important components. Knowledge economy is an economy, which creates, disseminates and uses knowledge to enhance its growth and development in all sectors including agriculture, industry and service sectors. Liberal economic policies in the context of globalisation some of the important pillars of the knowledge economy are: educated and skilled workers, innovative and efficient system building information infrastructure. . Libraries and Information Centres are considered as service sectors in which all these pillars revolve. Integration of ICT in LICs has created new avenues and opportunities. In this case, there are three important stakeholders i.e. knowledge creators, knowledge processors and knowledge seekers. Information workforce or knowledge workers include: Network engineers, network administrators, web administrators, information scientists, knowledge managers, content developers and content managers. Design and development of digital library, digital resource management, management of library website, preservation of digital information resources, institutional repository, open source library management and digital library software, creating specialised workforce to handle these software, equipment and devices are some of the resulting outcomes of the knowledge industry. The growth and development of information society leads to a knowledge society. Information literacy is basically empowering people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals.

M.D.Gs (Millenium Development Goals) &S.D.G.(Sustainable Development Goals)

At the beginning of the new millennium, world leaders gathered at the United Nations to shape a broad vision, which was translated into eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which remained as the overarching development framework for the world for last 15 years (2000-2015). The goals were: To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; to achieve universal primary education; to promote gender equality and empower women; to reduce child mortality; to empower maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; to ensure

environmental sustainability and to develop a global partnership for development. Developing countries have made substantial progress towards achievements of MDGs although the progress is highly variable across goals, countries and regions. For more than a decade, MDGs remained a focus of global policy debates and national policy debates and national policy planning. The probable shortfall in achievement of the MDG is indeed serious, regrettable and deeply painful for people with low income. There is a widespread feeling among policy makers and civil society that, progress against poverty, hunger and disease is notable that MDGs have played an important part in securing that progress and that globally agreed goals should continue beyond 2015.It was also felt that, climate change and other environmental ills are existing worldwide, the world's government seem poised to adopt a new round of global goals to follow the 15 year MDG period. As the MDGs came to their deadlines in 2015, a new agenda emerged to transform the world to better meet human needs and the requirements of the economic transformation, known as "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". The monitoring of the MDGs taught that, data are indispensable element of the development agenda. Better data are needed for the post-2015 development agenda. Real time data are needed to deliver better and faster decision. Geospatial data can support monitoring in many aspects of development from healthcare to natural resources management. New technology is changing the way data are collected and disseminated. Promoting open, easily accessible data and data literacy is key for effective use of data for development and decision-making. Data for development are public goods and should be made available to the public in open formats. Data as the basis of evidence-based decision making and accountability are a crucial pillar of the post-2015 development agenda. In 2015, the world agreed a new set of global goals to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve sustainable development. Building on the MDGs, they are known as SDGs. In 1987, the World Commission on Economic Development (WCED) defined sustainable development as, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."This definition assumes that all people must be able to maintain a reasonable quality of life indefinitely. However, more recent conceptions of sustainable development now recognise that it relies on the intersection of three important principles related to the a) environment, b) social equity and c) economics. The environmental principle requires that society protects its environmental resources. The social equity principle requires that, everyone, independent of initial endowments, be treated fairly. If people are not treated equitably, they will exploit natural resources. The economic principle requires the adequate production of resources for society to maintain a reasonable standard of living. Without economic development, we will not be able to secure the well-being of our own and future generations. Sustainable Development Goals are as follows: 1) No poverty; 2)Zero hunger; 3)Good health and wellbeing;4)Quality education; 5)Gender equality; 6)Clean water and sanitation;7) Affordable and clean energy;8) Decent work and economic growth; 9)Industry, innovation and infrastructure; 10)Reduced inequalities; 11)Sustainable cities and communities; 12)Responsible consumption and production; 13)Climate action; 14)Life below water; 15)Life on land;16) Peace, justice and strong institutions; 17)Partnerships for the goals. Goal no. 4 of the SDG is: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all..

Diversity of knowledge landscapes

Quality and quantity of education is directly related to the appropriate syllabus/curriculum, which matches the labour market and the need of the society/community. Similarly the quality approach to information service in digital era is also applicable to Library and Information services. The effective use and drive for use depends on flexible delivery and integration of ICT, which varies from simple web browsing tools to artificial intelligence, which can extract intelligence/scholarship from contents. The basic services range from traditional approach to functional approach; social needs to document delivery; knowledge-based to technology-based with value addition to information services; from conservation-preservation to use of hard-core technology, from legal and ethical issues of information to academics of practicing librarians i.e. information literacy and participation in pedagogy/curriculum. As is happening in other fields, transformation is also taking place in all levels in LIS education. For example: service models, access to resources, interaction with users, user participation etc. Use of web 2.0 has solved most of the problems in libraries bringing the services to the required heights in digital environment. The strategy in knowledge society is moving towards value addition to user-centric services like information acquisition,

navigation, dissemination, interpretation, understanding and archiving, which support to research and development leading to information ecology.

Information Ecology

We, the library professionals will have to learn, before understanding any task, to first ask the question, "What information do I need, and in what form, and when?"....The next question people have to learn to ask is, "To whom do I owe which information, when and where." said Peter Ducker. Information ecology includes a much richer set of tools. Information ecologists can mobilise not only architectural designs and IT but also information strategy, politics, behavior, information staff and work processes to produce better information environment. Besides thinking holistically about an organization, there are four key attributes of information ecology: 1) integration diverse types of information; 2) recognition of evolutionary change; 3) emphasis on observation and description; and 4) focus on people and information behavior. The ecological management approach encompasses six most critical components of information ecology- 1) strategy, 2) politics, 3) behaviour/culture, 4) staff, 5) processes, and 6) architecture. The information staff are the best identifiers, categorisers, filterers, interpreters, and integrators of information. By this it is not indicative to the IT people running the computers but those, who provide and interpret information. They handle the more valuable forms of information such as organisational knowledge and follow best practices

Information literacy

Information literacy is the ability to define one's information needs and then to access, process, evaluate and use information for decision- making, learning and problem-solving. It is a tool for life-long learning in the networked environment. Information Literacy comprises the competencies to recognise information needs of readers to locate, evaluate, apply and create information within cultural and societal contexts. It further extends beyond current technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking and interpretive skills beyond professional boundaries and empowers individuals and communities. Need for information literacy: 1) Participative citizenship 2) Social inclusion 3) Creation of new knowledge 4) Personal, vocational, corporate and organisational empowerment 5) Lifelong learning 6) Bridging the digital divide. Information literacy include: Basic PC skills, internet skills, web skills, word processing skills. Information literacy strategies include: Information literacy for fresher. The objectives of information literacy include: knowing how to locate and access information, knowing how to understand and use information, knowing how to locate and access information. Information literacy can go a long way to develop India as a knowledge economy by supporting lifelong learning for developing independent learners and critical thinkers at all levels- particularly in LICs.

Four Pillars of Education

According to the UNESCO report "Learning: the treasure within"- there are four pillars of learning. Those are: 1) Learning to know: by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth. This interprets to gyan yoga, meaning capacity to learn/ urge to learn; 2) Learning to do: in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. This does not mean –what you are doing. But it is how you are doing it. ; 3) Learning to live together: by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence. This is the most significant one as now we are living in a world that is unified by technology. 4) Learning to be: interprets to develop one's personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy. This is the most important value. We have to find out which is our inner consciousness? It is seen that, greater beings are shining like a thousand suns beyond the great darkness. Computers may think they are very complex. But there are things more complex than the computer and that is the human mind. Hence, knowledge management, skill development, individual identity and team spirit are the essential elements for the emerging learning society, which can easily be fulfilled through information literacy programmes as mentioned earlier.

Quality education

"The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. This we believe."—said Prof. D. S. Kothari, Education Commission (1964-66) .DR. R. A. Mashlekar while providing a roadmap for future progress and development of our country gave five-point agenda for the twenty-first century India as

:Child-centric education, Woman-centred family, Human-centred development, Knowledge-centred society and Innovation- centred India. According to John Dewey, "Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but life itself."

According to "Education for all" of UNESCO, Quality education is improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measureable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Quality is the heart of education and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environment is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one, which satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experiences of living. NCF 2005 (National Curriculum Framework) reports that, learning has become an isolated activity, which is not encouraging for children to link knowledge with their lives in any vital way. It needs to be remembered that, "every child is unique". But what is presented and transmitted in the name of learning in school is bypassing vital dimensions of the human capacity to create new knowledge. Quality education includes a concern for quality of life in all dimensions like maintaining peace, protecting the environment and predisposition towards social change. Quality is not merely a measure of efficiency, it has a value dimension. Those, who complete their school education, are in need of continuous learning, as knowledge is dynamic, tumultuous and infinite in nature. Learning is possible through reading. The books not only teach few facts but also enriches the imagination, widen the outlook, develop a fact finding attitude and train to use the leisure hour properly. This shows that, social and educational significance of books cannot be underestimated. Knowledge outside the classroom is cross-curricular and organic in nature. It is not confined to single subject/ discipline. Knowledge may be constructed through education. Quality is the heart of education and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environment is fundamentally important to the children, young people and adults. A quality education is one, which satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experiences of living. Tbilisi conference in 1997 recommends that, all the concerned international agencies should take necessary steps to establish an international programme in environmental education, interdisciplinary in approach, in school and out of school, encompassing all levels of education, and directed towards the general public and the ordinary citizen living in rural and urban areas in particular.

Role of LICs/Challenges for LIS professionals

The roles of library and information professionals have changed. They are no longer keepers of information, but teachers of information. Organising user education programme, bibliographic instruction programme, computer literacy and digital literacy programmes are some of the challenges faced by the professionals. The LICs strike a balance between print and digital technology, encourage interdisciplinary interactions, develop institutional repositories and tap the knowledge-base of their institutions. The librarian acts as a bridge between large resources and the users they need them. The librarian does a proper selection of quality content from the web resources, do value addition and then give it to the users. Libraries have been the centre of the academic environment. It is said that, "Google can bring you back one lakh answers, but it is the librarian, who would give you back the right answer."So, librarian is above the Google. According to John Naisbitt, "We are drowning in the sea of information but starving for knowledge."Due to information explosion and technological advancement, somebody has to filter the information. Metadata has a greater role in discoverability, especially in the context of linked and open data. The librarian has the skill to organise, aggregate and to crowd- source. Advent of e-resources and their increased usage has changed the library scenario from physical to virtual. Hardware and software compatibility is an issue with e-resources. Besides usage, security of information is very important. We must know how to use information in a most secured manner. W hen the library procures the discovery tools, collection of the library becomes more visible and it becomes easier to provide services through single window. EZproxy and Open Athens helps in networking the libraries. Both libraries and librarians are proved to be irreplaceable and have evolved new functions in the digital era for the reasons like: Information on the internet is limited, Digital library is still online but no longer on the internet, Internet is not free as numerous academic research papers are accessible through registration, Digitisation doesn't mean destruction of libraries as only copyright free documents are available freely, Digitisation is for survival from natural disaster. The libraries are above Google-the popular search engine. The hard copies of the books are highly popular because of their

convenience in reading. The libraries and librarians are inevitable to the knowledge society. An open access to scholarly literature is highly beneficial to researchers and has a wide support as a concept. But it needs viable revenue models and great commitment among the promoters. Librarians play a vital role in promoting open access both through OA (Open Access)self archiving and OA journal publishing proving as a leader in the era of open access .Library and Information managers have adopted a number of quantitative methods in order to evaluate library resources and services more objectively and effectively. Librametrics, Bibliometrics, Scientometrics and Nettometrics have emerged in different periods of time to evaluate the resources and services of LICs. The study of information seeking behavior can stand on its own as an era of applied research, where the motive for the investigation is pragmatically related to system design and development. Therefore, libraries have a recognized social function in making knowledge available to all besides preserving the available indigenous knowledge. The library professionals also play a key role in protecting IPR (Intellectual Property Rights), which reflects their responsibilities in the knowledge society.

Conclusion

Even if there is a paradigm shift in the field of LIS, many libraries are passive repositories of knowledge, where information comes in but does not go out. Librarians focus too much on preservation and librarians tend to view users as potential threats. Librarians do not create information & preserve information created by others but rarely do they synthesise the information. Economic pressures are being felt as libraries now face the choice between further investment in physical library acquisitions, infrastructure and streamlining of their resources in digital era .How do we harness knowledge? How do we distribute knowledge? How do we connect people with knowledge? This is very challenging indeed. The library model typically assumes a physical repository. Rare and few, who still consider library time is important and wedge into their schedule are reluctant to do so, for fear that they are being caught reading. When the readers visit the library can evaluate the resources, use the resources, recommend for betterment and feel the importance of the library as the third space- next to home and workplace. Inquisitiveness for data/ information /knowledge will prove that librarians as programmers, system analysts, database administrators, information resource managers, system and network administrators and finally they are above Google. The most significant part is: marketing of available information. Marketing is possible through organising different information literacy programmes. SWOT- analysis of the library resources, services by the library staff would be beneficial in bringing transformation in LICs. Use of library can convert the country to a reading nation and finally a leading nation. Therefore, our former president-Late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam very rightly said, “Great Books Ignite Imagination, Imagination leads to Creativity, Creativity Blossoms Thinking, Thinking provides Knowledge, Knowledge makes us Great.” We can strengthen our knowledge economy and can contribute in achieving the sustainable development goals.

References

[1]. Mulligan, M., Buxton, M., Lane, R., Neave, M., & Richardson, A. (2015). *An introduction to sustainability: Environmental,social and personal perspectives.* London: Routledge.
[2]. Baker, S. (2016). *Sustainable development (2nd ed.).* London: Routledge.
[3]. http://www.unece.org/oes/nutshell/2004-2005/focus_sustainable_development.html
[4]. http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/alp/103-fbradley-alp.pdf
[5]. http://old.nlb.by/html/news2005/Freedman/Freedman.htm
[6]. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld
[7]. Davenport, T. H., & Prusak, L. (1997). *Information ecology: mastering the information and knowledge environment.* New York: Oxford University Press.
[8]. 8.UNCESO. (1996). *Learning: the treasure within report to UNCESO of the international commission on education for the twenty-first century*. france: UNESCO.
[9]. *National curriculum framework 2005*.(2005).New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training.
[10]. Barnes, J. (2011).*Cross-curricular learning 3-14 (2nd ed)*.Los Angeles ,CA: SAGE. Tomorrow’s Publisher.
12. www/un/sdg.pdf